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STATE FOR EUR/ERA (SGRAY), EUR/WE (TSMITH)
STATE ALSO FOR EEB/TPP/ABT/BTT (JBOBO)
USDA FOR FAS-ELIZABETH JONES
STATE PLEASE PASS USTR FOR M.CLARKSON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EUN](#) [TBIO](#) [NL](#)
SUBJECT: DUTCH ON EU'S PROGRESS ON BIOTECH

REF: A. STATE 158225

[1](#)B. STATE 153542
[1](#)C. ENSTROM-DASTIN/GRAY EMAIL 11-21-07

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ACCORDINGLY.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Post shared points in reftels on the November 21
WTO Reasonable Period of Time (RPT) deadline and on EU policy
regarding low levels of unapproved biotech products in
imports with contacts at the Dutch ministries of Agriculture
(MinAg), Economic Affairs (MEA), and Foreign Affairs (MFA).
MEA and MFA contacts deferred to their MinAg colleagues on
the issue. Bart van den Assum, Policy Officer for Nature and
Food Quality at the MinAg, told FAS officers on November 21
that the GONL would maintain its policy of voting for
approval of biotech varieties that were assessed as safe by
the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). He said the GONL
was also concerned by the slow EU approval process for
biotech varieties and its policy of zero tolerance for
unapproved varieties in imports as well as the negative
effect of the current situation on the competitiveness of the
Dutch agricultural and food processing sector.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Van den Assum noted that nine organizations
representing the Dutch agriculture and food sector had sent a
letter to the Dutch MinAg and Parliament on November 9. The
letter expressed their concern about EU biotech policies,
which restrict the sector's options in sourcing raw materials
and ingredients. Van den Assum said Dutch Minister of
Agriculture Gerda Verburg planned to seek an open discussion
on the EU approval process for new biotech varieties at the
November 26 Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting.
However, he said the Dutch were not optimistic that this
meeting would generate any results given current views among
other EU member states. He added that the Dutch had been
working closely at the working level with their UK and
Swedish counterparts, even though there did not appear to be
any cooperation at the ministerial level to reach a shared
strategy.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Post also reported these findings via email (ref
C).
Arnall